

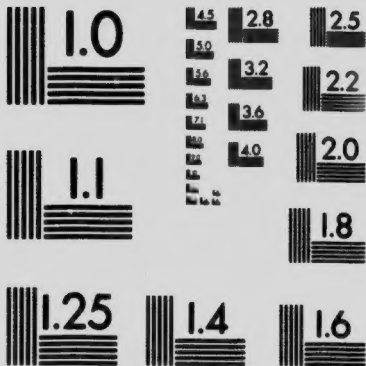
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[Bond, (Sir) Robert]

THE PREMIER'S SPEECH

On Moving Second Reading of Education Amendment Bill.

RIGHT HON. THE PREMIER (Sir Robert Bond)—I beg leave to move the second reading of this Bill. I have been greatly pleased to notice the very keen interest that has been manifested by my friends of the opposite side of the House in reference to the introduction of the measure. Of course there could be no mere selfish or party motive attributable to them in the matter, their anxiety and impatience was born of a desire to see a measure introduced that would meet with the unanimous approval of the House and merit the commendation of every person outside of it. I trust that my honorable friends would not be disappointed in their desires or expectations in relation to the Bill. The question is one of more than ordinary importance, and therefore it was not surprising that so much interest had been manifested in its introduction. The Bill, Mr. Speaker, has in view a three-fold object. First, the consolidation of the acts of 1895-96-97-98-99-1901-02. Secondly, the adding to the present Legislative vote for educational purposes the sum of \$10,000, and to provide that that sum shall be distributed in the following manner: namely, that \$7,000 shall be placed at the disposal of the Boards of Education outside of St. John's to help destitute places, and that the sum of \$3,000 shall go to augment the salary of teachers throughout the island. In the third place, the Bill is intended to amend in some particulars the existing law as regards education. The first amendment has reference to superior schools. It is considered that at present there is not a sufficient safe-guard against the grant for

superior schools being devoted to purposes other than those which it was set apart by the House. The special object of the amendment then is to provide for the expenditure of the grant for the specific purpose for which it was allocated, viz., superior or higher education. The second amendment is intended to harmonize the schedule having reference to the grading of teachers with the syllabus of the Council of Higher Education. It is the opinion of the Superintendents of Education that at the present time teachers advanced too rapidly to the A A degree in order to obtain the grant of \$100 per year that attaches to it; that there is not sufficient time allowed for those teachers to mature. For instance, a third grade teacher may pass from the third grade to the A A degree and not have the qualifications of a first grade teacher who got only \$75 on his grade, and the object that this Act has in view in this regard is to make the A A qualification superior to that of first grade, which is not the case at the present time. The third amendment has reference to the Teachers Pension Fund and to section 59 of the Act of 1895. That section provided for the granting of pensions at the age of 60 years. The Superintendents of Education have recommended that a pension should be granted to female teachers at the age of 55 years. The reason for this I think will be obvious to the House. The female teachers are the weaker portion of the profession and are more susceptible to the ill results of a too sedentary life than are those of the stronger sex. They are liable to break down at an earlier age. It was therefore only proper, only ordinarily considerate that preference in this

regard should be given to the female teachers of the island. Further, this Act provides for teachers who through illness may become incapacitated and compelled to retire from the service. At present there is no provision for such cases. One who retired got back merely the premium which he had paid into the pension fund, together with compound interest thereon. This act gave to every teacher who became broken down by illness and disease a retiring allowance of \$2.50 for every year of service, thus a teacher of 25 years' standing would get \$62.50 per year for life; one of 30 years' standing would get \$75.00 per year for life. The maximum amount of \$100.00 would be payable at the age of 60 years. The question may be asked, can the pension fund bear this strain? In reply, I unhesitatingly say yes. Thanks to the wisdom and foresight of the Rev. Canon Pilot, who might be called the father of the teachers' pension fund in this colony, the fund will bear the extra strain proposed. There is now at the credit of the pension scheme the handsome sum of \$27,000. As the house is aware, the scheme was intended to cover a period of 20 years from 1892. It is estimated that at the end of that time, in 1912, the fund will pay from \$120 to \$130 per year as pensions. At the termination of that period new calculations will have to be made. It might be asked by the house how was the fund thus augmented? In reply, I would say that the profits that have accrued, have arisen from withdrawals, Government grants and forfeitures. The fourth amendment reads as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may from time to time upon the recommendation of the Boards of Education concerned, and with the concurrence of the Superintendents of Education, authorize the establishment of amalgamated schools in sparsely populated settlements where the number of children will not warrant the establishment of separate schools. In such cases the Board and Superintendents consenting to such arrangement may allot a portion of the funds accruing to their respective Boards for the purposes of such schools, and such funds shall be paid to the Board of Education of the denomination having the majority of population in such settlement, and such Board of Education shall have the management of said school: Provided that should any one of such Boards of Education desire at any time to withdraw

from such arrangement it may do so by giving six months' notice through its chairman to the Colonial Secretary, and the funds of the withdrawing board shall from the date of the expiry of such notice cease to be paid to such managing board and shall revert to the board so withdrawing."

This clause is the result of friendly conferences, and does not in any way partake of the nature of compulsory legislation. The Government has moved thus carefully in the matter as to avoid all contention among the various religious denominations. The clause in no way affects the principle that underlies the present system of denominational education, but provides merely a means whereby an apparent evil attending the working of the present system will be remedied. As a result of friendly discussion with the representatives of the various religious bodies—the four Superintendents of Education—this measure has been agreed upon as calculated to effectively remove a serious defect in our educational system, a defect that has been observed for a great number of years, but which no former Government ventured to deal with. The defect to which I allude has been made manifest by the fact that, in many of the smaller towns and settlements, no schools exist. This condition of things has appertained because there are not sufficient children of any one denomination to warrant the establishment of a school of that denomination. Under the provisions of this act it is possible for the several denominations in such small settlements to unite for the establishment of one good school, which shall be known and conducted as an amalgamated school. Another phase of the defect is shown by the splitting up of the grant in certain small settlements to support two or three inferior schools. The salaries given were so small, and the attendance was so small that the schools were rendered practically useless. The attendance did not warrant a first class teacher, and the salary that could be paid was little short of a starvation wage. I think it will be admitted that when a teacher is provided, one of the highest possible grade should be selected. It could not be expected that the professional services of a good man, of a man thorough in his profession, could be secured unless an adequate pecuniary recompense be paid. The law applies in the commercial world that if a good article is wanted a good price must be paid therefor. It also ob-

tained in the professional world. Unless good salaries were provided, it would be impossible to obtain the efficient teachers so desirable in the training of the youth of the colony, who in the ordinary course of nature must shortly take our places in the business and professional life of the country. The training of the young is not a mere piece of job work, to which anyone may turn his hand, but a professional calling which requires knowledge, judgment and experience. It is essential that those who are to form the minds and hearts of the young should possess the highest possible qualifications for that important work, and it is beyond dispute that that talent cannot be obtained unless an adequate wage be provided. A few days ago he had been informed by one of the Superintendents of Education that during the last twelve months nearly sixty per cent. of the ranks of teachers. What does that mean? It did not apply to the colony, but, merely, but, unless he had been correct in the statement, it applied to all. It meant that those men and women found it necessary or desirable to change their line of work, and some to move outside the limits of the colony to expend their energy in other places and other callings. The reason was quite apparent. They were not able, up to the present, to obtain a sufficient wage at home to warrant their remaining. That meant, further, that a large portion of the revenue of the colony that had been expended in the training of these teachers was going to enrich other countries, for the training they had received here to fit them for the teaching profession fitted them for the higher walks of life and positions of more emolument in the neighbouring provinces. Their departure meant loss to this Island from more standpoints than one. It behoved this legislature, as matter of fact politicians, to face the difficulty boldly and devise some means to enlist the sympathy of the teachers in their work here, and encourage them to continue here the work of their profession. That encouragement must come in the shape of emolument. The census of 1901 bears eloquent testimony to the difficulties that attend the advancement of education in this colony, and to the necessity for the amendment in the Education Act under review. In no other country in the world did like difficulties prevail. The population of this colony is scattered over its coastline of four thousand and odd miles.

The towns and settlements are for the most part separated from one another by great distances. The avocations of the people are such that they had located themselves on the fringe of coast line. In many cases the people had settled themselves at places to which the approach by sea was almost the only possible one. The difficulty of making roads to connect those remote settlements was apparent to all who had journeyed around the coast line. The difficulties presented were peculiar to the country. It has no counterpart, so far as I know, in any other part of the world. For instance, there are 1372 towns and settlements in the Island. Out of that number 893 had a population of from 1 to 100 persons only. There are 376 settlements with a population of from 1 to 25 persons only; 255 with a population of from 25 to 50 persons; 157 with a population of from 50 to 75 persons; and 105 with a population of from 75 to 100 persons only. There are 8462 children living more than 1½ miles from a school. Wrapt up in these figures is the whole of our difficulties in connection with the educational system of Newfoundland. They are difficulties for which no person up to the present moment had offered a solution. There are 72,956 persons over five years of age who cannot read. Out of that number there are probably some in attendance at school, but not sufficiently far advanced to be rated in the census as being able to read. Allowing for these, there is still the deplorable fact to be faced that at least 25 per cent. of our population have not enjoyed any of the advantages of school training. I hope that I am correct in assuming that the older folk comprised the majority of that number. If I am correct in that assumption then the beneficial effect of the liberal grant which has been made, and which would be applied by the School Inspectors and the Educational Boards with the prudence which had characterised their actions in the past, would be more apparent in the near future. Again, there are 51,783 children between 5 and 15 years of age. Of these 35,204 attended school, leaving 16,584 who did not. Now it will be safe to assume, I think, that the 16,584 children who do not attend school are prevented from so doing by the reason of there being no school in the settlement where they reside, and the nearest school being too remote for them to attend. I hope that under the operation of this enabling clause in the Act that deplorable

state of things will be entirely rectified. In drafting the clause great care had been taken to provide for the religious instruction of the children, and that they shall receive such instruction from the representative of the religious denomination to which they belong. By this we have maintained the principles which underlies the present educational system, and happily I have received the co-operation and unanimous approval of all the superintendents of education. The conscience clause read as follows :—

There shall be no religious or doctrinal subject taught in such amalgamated schools during school hours; but the teachers may, either after or before school hours, or during recess, teach religious doctrine to the pupils of his own denomination, or to any others who, with their parents' consent, may be willing to remain. Arrangements shall also be made by which the children of the other denominations may have the use of the school house, outside of the school hours, for receiving religious instruction by some respectable person of the respective denomination appointed by the clergyman.

There are some who profess to believe that religious instruction is out of place in the ordinary day school. With such a view I have no sympathy whatever. When we consider that the business of education is to assist the growth of our spiritual nature; to dispose of the circumstances that affect it in such a way as best to promote the harmonious development of all the faculties, then we recognize the importance of an education that is not divorced from religious training. The establishment of amalgamated schools is no way interferes with religious instruction, in fact its importance is recognized and emphasized by the paragraph in the Act which I have just read, and ample provision has been made so that direction may be given to the moral and spiritual natures of the children in the dawn of their existence by an authorized representative of the religious body to which they respectively belong. I beg to draw attention to the clause having reference to the Council of Higher Education, inasmuch as I shall propose to the house an amendment to the clause as it now appears in the bill before us. The Council of Higher Education consisted originally of twenty-three members and they had placed at their disposal four thousand dollars. While the work of the Council has increased enormously during

the ten years since their appointment, the original amount placed at their disposal to carry on the work has never been supplemented until the present time. I have been asked to move the house to grant an additional sum of \$1,500 to be added to the original vote of \$4,000, and I have very much pleasure, indeed, in complying with the request; and I have not the least doubt but the house will readily respond to the invitation. When we consider the fact that the gentlemen who compose the Council of Higher Education are performing a labor of love; that they are not paid for their arduous and important work, any recommendation that comes from them is worthy of the most careful consideration of the house. Their work is purely a philanthropic one; they have no personal ends to serve; and I submit, therefore, that any recommendation emanating from that body as not only deserving of the best consideration of this house, but should be readily conceded to. Before the establishment of the Council of Higher Education, there was really no one common standard to which teachers could aspire, or pupils work up to. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have established, by the Council of Higher Education, a standard known as the Associate of Arts, to which teachers, as well as pupils, may aspire. In the case of teachers it means increased salary, and in the case of scholars it opens to them a chance of attaining a degree, which is very little inferior to the London Matriculation Degree. The expenses connected with the Council of Higher Education now amounts to \$5,642, and is distributed under the following heads:—

To payment for examinations.....	\$2,500
To prizes and scholarships.....	1,000
To teachers premiums, stationery, advertising, &c.....	700
To supervising.....	720
To secretary.....	500
To attendant in waiting.....	72
To incidental (petty cash).....	150
Total	<u>\$5,642</u>

At the present time the Council has to face a deficit of \$942. I hope with the acquiescence of the house to remove this obligation from the gentlemen of the Council, so that they may carry on without embarrassment the praiseworthy work for which they have volunteered.

The amount of money set apart by this

Bill for Educational purposes amounts to \$186,638.47, which is about 85 cents *per capita*, and it is distributed under the following heads, namely :—

General Education Grant.....	\$91,702.18
Poor Districts Grant.....	6,103.31
Special Grant at the disposal of the Boards of Educa- tion outside of St. John's to help destitute places...	15,983.34
Superior Schools outside of St. John's	5,851.62
Pupil Teachers.....	6,197.29
Teachers Augmentation.....	30,942.02
Colleges	11,327.19
Industrial Schools or Manual Training	3,000.00
Scholarships.....	600.00
Inspection.....	8,681.52
Interest on Pensions (esti- mated amount).....	750.00
Higher Education	5,500.00
Total.....	\$186,638.47

I do not propose at this time to deal with these several allocations, but there is one amount that I deem it most necessary to refer to inasmuch as the object for which it is set apart is, to some extent, misunderstood. I refer to the allocation of \$3,000 for Industrial Education or Manual Training, voted by the Legislature for the first time last year. It had been misunderstood in some quarters, because a wilful and deliberate attempt had been made to deceive the public. I am sorry to observe that this was done merely for party and political purposes. An attempt was made to arouse sectarian prejudice in relation to it by the unfounded assertion that the vote was given for the benefit of the Roman Catholic Orphanage at Mount Cashel. There could be nothing further from the truth. The amount was proportioned on a *per capita* basis and given to the various denominations. In reading over the report made by the Rev. Dr. Curtis, Superintendent of Methodist Schools, for 1902, I observed the following paragraph which deals with the subject. The rev. gentleman says :—

"A grant of \$3,000 was made for Manual Training by the Legislature at the session of 1902, to be divided between the religious denominations upon the *per capita* basis. This will admit of the establishment of one school each by the large denominations. As, however, the apparatus is expensive, the income for the current year will be

required for that object. The Methodist College Executive has had the question of providing a suitable building under consideration, and a committee has been appointed to co-operate with the Superintendent to this end. The committee has given some time to consultation, but no definite conclusion has so far been reached. It is expected, however, that a school will be open at the beginning of the next education year."

The Rev. Canon Pilot, Superintendent of Church of England Schools, has just placed in my hands a particularly able and exhaustive report on the subject, which has recently engaged his attention. The rev. and learned gentleman says :—

"I have assumed that as a Manual Training School is to be established in our midst, such a beginning would naturally be made in St. John's, but I should deprecate any plan by which the whole of the grant coming to the Church of England would be swallowed up here.

"There must be somehow a recognition that St. John's is not the whole of the Island, and that its people have no exclusive right to the privileges for this grant. There are large and important centres of population in four of our principal bays; these must be considered, and after trial has been made in this new departure and found successful and attractive in St. John's, its extension will be a matter of simple justice. I look forward with great expectations to the benefit which will accrue to all our schools, by placing in them teachers who shall have themselves gone through the prescribed course of Manual Training, and who shall introduce into the schools some form of Manual Training, of cardboard work even, where woodwork is not available.

"For the present I have confined my remarks to the Manual Training of boys. I might with force enlarge upon the claims of girls to equal recognition in some other form of Manual Training, say in connection with Domestic Science, but must leave them for future notice.

"I have only to add that, impressed as I have become by my enquiry into the subject of Manual Training as a true branch of education, and convinced that the exercise of hand and eye, under correct direction, is of no less importance than that of the memory, and power of verbal expression, its introduction into our system of education ought no longer to be delayed. The wisdom of the Legislature in voting \$3,000 for this and its elder brother Industrial Education, can, in my opinion, be no longer questioned. Indeed I shall be much surprised if, when we have got fairly under way and see the results of even two years only of this new process, the House of Assembly be not assailed with petitions for its wide extension."

Such are the words of the rev. gentle-

man who represents the Church of England Educational interests in this Colony. I have no reason to refer to my Roman Catholic friends in this matter, for they were the first to introduce manual training and Industrial Schools into this colony. It has afforded me great interest and pleasure to visit the Industrial School at Mount Cashel and to see the manual training in progress there. There is to be seen an object lesson to all. The importance of the work being carried on there and the results that will assuredly accrue from that institution can not be estimated. I do not hesitate to say that this community is under a deep obligation to the rev. brotherhood who enterprised that school, inasmuch as they brought under the notice of this house and the public generally the great advantages of manual training to the youth of this country. Now we have the assurance of the Church of England and Methodist Superintendents of Education that those religious bodies will take advantage of this grant. On further persuing the Rev. Dr. Pilot's report, I notice that the rev. gentleman in clarion notes sounds a warning, as well as an exhortation, that it would be well for Educationists and this Legislature to take heed off. The Rev. Canon says:—

"Manual Training inspires respect for bodily labour and corrects the notion that literary occupations are necessarily more dignified than those of the skilled labourer. In this connection I cannot but refer to the tendency of many among our own people to ignore manual labour of any kind, and to attach excessive and exclusive importance to the education of the intellect as a means of social advantage, not always to their own advancement. They take it that the road to advancement lies through the schools, and the examinations of the Council of Higher Education, and, biased perhaps by the attitude of the class above them towards manual labour, they conceive a distaste for it that impels many who might excel as tradesmen or fishermen into the ill-paid ranks of those who wear broadcloth, and who grow thin and hungry behind a humdrum counter, or under the tyranny of a low paid pen. To such an extent does this idea prevail in Newfoundland, that many a youth would rather become and remain for the rest of his life an ill-paid teacher, who might have gained a competence for himself and comforts for his old age, had he engaged in some manual employment; and many a young woman would rather become a teacher under the same circumstances, who, as a parlour-maid, might have received better

pay with a comfortable home and good food to boot."

These, sir, are the words of wisdom as well as of kindness. There is no mistaking the fact, that high and noble and philanthropic as are the aims of Higher Educationists to-day, the tendency of their labours is in no small degree to make the children despise the calling of their fathers and to look with disfavour, if not contempt, upon manual labour of all kinds. We may close our eyes to the fact, and in our enthusiasm for that Higher Education strive to ignore the unpleasant truth, but let us consider the words of the rev. gentleman, and of others who have a right to speak with authority, because of their wide experience and observation, and one and all of us will have to honestly arrive at the same conclusion. I believe that no more important step could have been taken than the training of the youth of this colony in manual work, and I hope the day is not far distant when the vote of \$3,000 will be increased to ten times that sum. To-day in the Dominion of Canada manual labor forms an important part of their Public School system. It has been introduced into sixteen towns and is being taught to six thousand students. In London, England, there are three hundred centres for such training, and the expenditure every year amounts to nine hundred and forty-four thousand pounds sterling, all of which has come about in eleven years. Standing to-day on this vantage ground and looking back over the past twenty-nine years, we see much to congratulate ourselves upon in regard to educational matters, notwithstanding the great difficulties surrounding the advancement of education in the Colony; the peculiarities of the country, the occupation of the people, the difficulties of approaching the settlements scattered along a rugged coastline and separated by great distances; taking all these things into consideration there is much to be thankful for in regard to this matter of education. Let us look back over 29 years, to the year 1874, and we find there were then only 34,005 persons recorded as being able to read and write, while to-day we have 115,930. In 1874 there were only 420 schools, to-day we have 783, with accommodation for 44,913 scholars. In 1874 the total grant for education was \$88,251.92, while to-day it was \$186,638.47. To those who were pioneers of education in this Colony

we owe very much, namely, the Rev. Canon Pilot, the late Dr. Milligan and the late Mr. Fenelon. By their zeal and devotion to the cause of education we owe the present high standard of which we are justly proud. The two latter gentlemen have passed away, they rest from their labours, but the former is still hale and hearty, to all appearances, as the day he entered upon the work, and as enthusiastic as ever. Younger men have filled up the ranks made vacant, and by reason of their high attainments, culture and energy, we may confidently look forward to no failing in the work, but rather to still greater advancement in the near future. I trust that in the remarks that I have made in moving the second reading of this Bill, there will be found sufficient to warrant the house in adopting the measure. I feel sure it is one that must commend itself to every member thereof. The difficulty anticipated in regard to the

important defect in our educational system to which I have alluded, has been removed by friendly discussion and mutual concessions. The guaranteed success of the important amendment in this bill in reference to amalgamated Schools lies in the fact that this is voluntary and not compulsory legislation. No matter how desirable legislation may be in matters pertaining to the welfare of the Colony, unless such legislation enlists public sympathy and support it must utterly fail.

We have in this bill the solution of a question that has puzzled all legislatures up to the present time. Therefore if the Government were to go out of power tomorrow they would have the satisfaction of knowing that they have accomplished for this country and for the education of generations to come more than any body of men that has ever sat in this house. I beg to move the second reading of the bill.

